Dr. Mitchell's Excellent Story.

A compact and strong answer to a question is given at page 298 of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell's story of "Constance Trescot" (The Century Company). "Do? Damn it! You can do nothing," says Col. Dudley to the unhappy Greyhurst at that point. This is a story of Missouri in the days of reconstruction. George Trescot of Massachusetts, who had been a Federal Major in the war, had gone to St. Ann in Missouri, in 1870, as agent for his father-in-law, an eccentric and exasperating person, who owned considerable land there. There were squatters on the land, and part of the land was in dispute. There was a lawsuit, and Greyhurst was the lawyer on the other side. He was a man of violent temper. Trescot won his case. Sharp words had passed between him and Greyhurst during the trial. Trescot, a most kindly and amiable man, was going to Greyhurst with a magnanimous proposition on his smiling lips, at the conclusion of the trial, when Greyhurst levelled a pistol at him and shot him

It is for the reader to determine for himself whether Greyhurst was anything more than a revengeful murderer. He had his excuse, which was possibly plausible. The chief point of the story is that Trescot's wife, a young woman of great beauty, devoted herself in a deliberate manner to a plan of revenge. She was from Massachusetts, and her cold purpose does not eem perfectly realistic and conformable to the restrained and admirable point of view established by Mr. Howells. All the other people in the story thought her peculiar; their opinion should be gratifying to Mr. Howells, but she gave no heed to it. Her one thought was to be revenged

Revenged she was. We have spoken of her deliberations. She went away to Europe and recovered her strength. At the end of a year she returned to St. Ann. Greyhurst was getting on. He had lived down the possibly inadequate odium attaching to his homicidal act. If he had been a man without sensitiveness he would probably have remained safe after Mrs. Trescot's return. As it was, she had no trouble in making him see ghosts. She followed him about in her weeds with her pale face. She sent him one or two letters of reminder-letters that did not hesitate to employ the word "murderer." He thought to marry a girl in California. Mrs. Trescot wrote a brief chapter of history to the girl, who thereupon threw Greyhurst over. He drank; he could not sleep; his affairs went wrong. At last, a desperate man, he again took up his revolver. He levelled it at Mrs. Trescot. She stood up with a smile and proclaimed herself glad to die.

"You fool!" said be, and shot himself dead. We have remarked at page 839 that Mrs. Trescot's sister and the young minister, whom she married later, talked of "the stormy politics of the day, and the last novel of Thackeray, which she had not read." This sounds like those who keep abreast of current fiction, saying such trenchant and comprehensive things in criticism as, "Oh, it is very good," or "I didn't care much for it." As this young woman and her minister were talking in 1872, which was nine years after Thackeray's death, as we remember, we must think that comment upon a "last novel" was less punctual then than it is nowadays.

That, however, is a small and unimportant matter. This is the best of Dr. Mitchell's stories that have come to our notice. It is very readable and it has an effective and strong dramatic quality. The account of the trial is admirable. A very good tale.

To Death in His Black Devil Wagon.

The promise of an eventful and vigorous chronicle is given early in Harris Burland's run, he ran into a quicksand on the Essex story of "The Black Motor Car" (G. W. Dillingham Company). In the course of the first ten pages we learn that Jack Porbank, has stolen £6,355 of the bank's money and is about to run away to South America with Mrs. de la Mothe, a widow, whose face, though faultily faultless and icily regular and splendidly null as a general thing, can light up on occasion and beam with a luminous provocation calculated to bewilder the male beholder. Porteous will assume disguise and sail in the next steamer to Buenos Ayres, for which distant seaport Mrs. de la Mothé has already bought him a ticket. He takes from his breast pocket and exhibits to his beautiful companion in wrong a packet containing fifty £100 notes, newly abstracted from the bank. He gives her five of the notes with which "to settle up a few things in England" before she follows him in the steamer sailing a

It is not a matter for wonder that at this momentous interview he should have accepted the lady's thoughtful offer of whiskey and soda water instead of tea. It did not surprise us to read that his hand shook as he raised the powerful beverage to his eager lips. We must say, however, that we do not understand why a lady of Mrs. de la Mothe's habit of thought should have wished to settle up things that she was leaving behind. We should have supposed her qualified to leave them unsettled without being very much disturbed in the matter. We have indicated merely the beginning.

This is not a simply story, to be made ou from the first ten pages. We may reveal a little. Jack Porteous did not sail away to Buenos Ayres with the bank's stolen money. He and the beautiful Mrs. de la Mothe did not live deliriously in Argentina on the proceeds of a theft. When he left Mrs. de la Mothe that afternoon he went like Joan through four hundred pages to his club and made himself comfortable. He had a hot bath and dressed for the evening. He had sherry and bitters before from a morning nap to catch a train one dinner. The dinner was flawless. He drank after dinner. He returned home late in a great fog. He found his wife sitting at the library table. Her head was bowed in her hands. She had no word for hima matter to be noted, for she usually had many. The poor lady was to speak to him on earth no more; she had passed away in Mary Imlay Taylor's new novel en-with a heart ailment. He was so much titled "My Lady Clancarty." The ingreimpressed and disturbed that he broke off with Mrs. de la Mothe. That enchantress, when she learned of his weakness, said: "Go, you cur!" She was not long about her revenge. She sent word to the bank, and he was arrested next day. He was

sentenced for fourteen years. Following upon this we have a bewildering succession of stray events. The illustrations indicate a good deal. We see the Lord Sunderland, the Earl subsequently Earl of Heatherstone surprising his daughter Agnes and Mr. Arthur Holme in the atti- banished the kingdom and his estates tude of lovers. "They sprang apart and, King William's Dutch favorites, and the turning round, confronted the Earl of Heatherstone. His heavy, handsome face was flushed with anger, but he controlled since the ceremony. With such a situation in the opening chapter the purpose himself with the skill of the trained diplomat. of the novel is immediately apparent— the reunion of the Lady Elizabeth and her Lady Agnes hid her crimson face in her Arthur Holme clinched his right

If he had clinched both fists it would not have astonished us. But who the dickens was Jordison? Why is it recorded that "Jermy drove his fists into Lipp's face with such force that half of the latter's front teeth went down his throat, and the next second he had bitten a piece out of and patches. To wait at the crucial moment front teeth went down his throat, and the next second he had bitten a piece out of and patches. To wait at the crucial moment graph written only for musicians, in which facts are dealt with as sternly as the most

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The great demand for "The Opal," published in February, justifies the Boston Herald in calling it "a shining success," and the Brooklyn Eagle in considering it "one of the brightest and cleverest books of the season." With frontspiece portrait in tint, \$1.25.

ing the overthrow of Jermy. There is

another picture illustrating that strong

point in the text where it says: "Jordison

his pocket blew three shrill calls upon it.

A few seconds later Holme heard cries and

splashing of water. He sprang at Jordi-

son, who blooked up the doorway, but the

latter moved aside. Holme tripped and came with a crash to the ground. The

next moment the two were looked in each

other's arms. In a minute Lipp and Jermy

came running up, and the three soon over-powered Holme. He was gagged, bound

hand and foot, and carried to the Red

There is still another picture showing

Lady Agnes trying to give meat and wine

from a full banquet table to Mr. Austin

Holme, who was a starving prisoner in an

and mocked the starving man.

adjoining room. Jordison prevented her,

Who was Jordison? We wonder if we

shall be telling too much if we say that

he was Jack Porteous, and that in pursuing his projects of revenge upon Agnes de la

Mothe he was now ignorantly torturing

he was now ignortantly torturing his own

son in the person of the so-called Arthur

Holme. This matter was set right; the

victim was fed andrevived; and then Jordi-

son started out in his black motor car to

kill Marie de la Mothe. This dreadful felio-

ity was denied to him, for she was already

dead when he reached her. He shot two

men who were out after him, and went on

in his black motor car at ninety miles an

hour. Abundant effort was made to in-

tercept him. Police telegrams were flashed ahead. All in vain. "Before he had passed

through Leicestershire be had run over two

policemen, smashed a dog cart to pieces,

and received five pellets from a gun in his

left arm. Four revolver bullets had struck

the car." At last, after a four hundred mile

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sure the reader that we have given only a

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whose name is legion. The daughter is

one of those remarkable characters never

found in England except in the pages of

fiction, who shoulders the responsibilities

of the household, does miraculous things

in art and would have retrieved the fallen

fortunes of the family according to time

honored customs by marrying the wealthy

owner of her own ancestral halls, save for

an untoward accident toward the close of

the story, which arouses the reader rudely

from his peaceful pursuit of the beaten

path of old-fashioned romance with a

inpleasant as it is unexpected.

shock that is like a rear end collision-as

in the first chapter in the good old way as

babies and prospective parties. They are

paired throughout the book and finally

betrothed when the needless and incon-

siderate death of the hero turns with dismal

tragedy a story which, according to all the

traditions of the British novel, belongs in

the comedy class and should have a happy

conclusion. Distinction obtained by such

artful violation of time honored literary

convention in a book which has otherwise

no originality is more iconoclastic than

artistic and leaves the reader feeling cheated and defrauded. To follow a girl

of English country life only to encounter

disaster in the end is like being wakened

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a gallant hero, courageous and romantic, a

period in which the strife between Jacobites

and Whigs furnished abundant oppor-

tunity for exciting episode and audacious

intrigue. The basic historic facts of the

story are good with the Lady Elizabeth

wedded at the age of 11 to the Irish Earl

by her ambitious and unprincipled father,

confiscated and bestowed upon one of

wedded pair never having seen each other

exiled consort in some romantic manner.

The accomplishment of its purpose is tediously retarded by the Lady Betty's

frequent changes of costume, at which

the reader is compelled to assist until weary

But the story is marred in the telling.

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didn't want to take.

coast, and that was the end of him.

went to the door, and taking a whistle from

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A horse of quite another color is the vigorous and virile narrative of "The Red Cravat," which Alfred Tresidder Sheppard has written of the days when Frederick William ruled in Prussia. Here are picturesqueness and old time flavor, color and action and originality. The construction of the story is solid and substantial. The character drawing is convincing and olever. sketched in with firm lines and a sure touch. The denouement is one of the most skilfully managed surprises of recent fiction. If at times the plot seems cumbrous and the game moves slowly, it must be remembered that Frederick William of Prussia and his giant grenadiers were heavy and cumbersome pieces to play. If the book is longer than it need to be, it is always diverting. The king's clumsy jester introduces a great deal of unnecessary Latin with his remarks, but it has nothing to do with the story, and the reader can leave it

Gut, as the writer should have done. The "Red Cravat" is the badge of the king's grensdier guard, and the story centres upon a young Englishman of goodly height, who was impressed into the wearing of it and of his rescue by the quick wit and daring of the English girl he loved. For the rest the book is an expression of a period not yet hackneyed by the fiction writer, thoroughly Teutonic in spirit and adequate in interpretation. The book is published by Macmillan & Co.

Alessandre Scarlatti.

What there is about music and art that makes people who write about them incapable of sticking to plain facts, experts may tell. Here we have the exception that proves the rule in an admirable mono-

rigid historian might demand, Mr. Edward J. Dent's "Alessandro Scarlatti" (Edward Arnold; Longmans, Green & Co.).

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Continued on Eighth Page.

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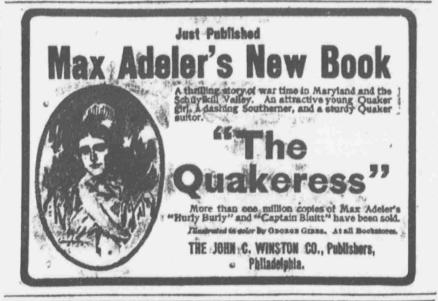
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Harper's Book News.

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